



CONQUEST OF INDIA BY BABUR

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Abstract

The grand Mughal Empire was founded by Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur the Chaghatai Turkish Mughal emperor, who according to all estimates is one of the most fascinating personalities in all history. He spent his greater part of his life outside India and though Lane-Poole says, his permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests. Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur was born on 14th February 1483 in Andijan the capital city of Ferghana now in Uzbekistan. He was the son of Umer Sheikh Mirza, the sovereign of Ferghana, by his wife Kutlug-Nigar Khanum Begum, the daughter of Yunis Khan Mongol descended from Chaghatai Khan, the second son of Changaiz Khan (Temuchign). Although Babur hailed from the Barlas tribe which was of Mongol origin, his tribe had embraced Turkic and Persian culture, converted to Islam and resided in Turkestan and Khorasan. His mother tongue was the Chaghatai language (known to Babur as Turki, "Turkic") and he was equally at home in Persian, the lingua franca of the Timurid elite. Babur the fearless military commander entered in to the heart of India in 1526 A.D. When Ibrahim Lodhi ascended the throne in 1517 A.D., the political structure in the Lodi dynasty had dissolved due to abandoned trade routes and the depleted treasury. The Deccan was a coastal trade route, but in the late fifteenth century the supply lines had collapsed. The decline and eventual failure of this specific trade route resulted in cutting off supplies from the coast to the interior, where the Lodi Empire resided. The Lodi Dynasty was not able to protect itself if warfare were to break out on the trade route roads; therefore, they didn't use those trade routes, thus their trade declined and so did their treasury leaving them vulnerable to internal political problems. Sultan Ibrahim Lodi the Ghazali Afghan (1489–1526 A.D), the youngest son of Sikandar, was the last Sultan of Delhi and a fearless military leader and kept out the opposition for almost a decade. He was engaged in warfare with the Afghans and the Mughals for most of his reign and died trying to keep the Lodi Dynasty from annihilation but was defeated in 1526 at the Battle of Panipat. This marked the end of the Sultanate of Delhi, and the rise of the Mughal Empire in India led by Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur.



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Introduction:

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was born on 14th February 1483. He was the son of Umer Sheikh Mirza, the sovereign of Ferghana, by his wife Kutlug- Nigar Khanum Begum the second of the three daughter's of Yunis Khan Mongol descended from Chaaghatai Khan, the second son of

Changaiz Khan (as follows) Yunis Khan, son of Wais Khan, son of Sher Ali Aughaan, son of Muhammad Khan, son of Khazir Khawaja Khan, son of Tughluq Timur Khan, son of Aishanbugha Khan, son of Dawa Khan, son of Baraq Khan, son of Yisuntawa Khan, son of Muatukan, son of Chaghatai Khan, son Changaiz Khan),¹ from his chief queen Aishan Daulat Begum, the grand Khan of the horde of Mughals. His (Babur's) name was chosen for him by Khawaja Nasir-ed-din Odeid-ullah, at that time the most celebrated spiritual guide in Transoxiana. The Chaghatis, we are told, having some difficulty in pronouncing the Arabic words Zaher-ud-din called him Babur, a name which his parents adopted; and his official designation became Zaher-ud-din Mohammad Babur, and he hailed from the Barlas tribe which was of Mongol origin.

Hence Babur, though nominally a Mughal (or Mongol in Turkish language), drew much of his support from the local Turkic and Iranian peoples of Central Asia, and his army was diverse in its ethnic makeup, including Tajiks (Sarts as called by Babur), Pashtuns (Afghans), Arabs, as well as Barlas and Chaghatai Turco-Mongols from Central Asia. Babur's army also included Qizilbash fighters, a militant religious order of Shia Sufis from Safavid Persia who later became one of the most influential groups in the Mughal court. Babur is said to have been extremely strong and physically fit. He could allegedly carry two men, one on each of his shoulders, and then climb slopes on the run, just for exercise. Legend holds that Babur swam across every major river he encountered, including twice across the Ganges River in North India. His passions could be equally strong. In his first marriage he was "bashful" towards 'Aisha Sultana Begum, the daughter of his uncle Sultan Ahmad Mirza, later losing his affection for her.

Amir Timur Beigh's (Timurlane) empire had been divided up among his own descendants, as well as those of Chengiz Khan. Its principal kingdoms and rulers were all interrelated as follows: Tashkhend, Sairam, Shahrukha were under Babur's elder maternal uncle, Mahmud Khan, the region between Tashkhend and Yalduz was under Babur's younger maternal uncle, Ahmad Khan, Samarkand and Bokhara were ruled by Babur's eldest paternal uncle, Ahmad Mirza, Badakhshan, Hisar and Kunduz were ruled by Babur's elder paternal uncle, Mahmud Mirza, Kabul and Ghazni were ruled by Babur's youngest paternal uncle, Ulugh Beg, Khorasan and Herat were under Husain Mirza, the head of the House of Timur and Farghana was the kingdom of which Babur's father, Umar Sheikh Mirza. Yunis Khan, twelfth in descent from Chengiz Khan (Tumuchin), had three daughters by his first wife. They were married respectively to Babur's two paternal uncles, Ahmad Mirza and Mahmud Mirza, and Babur's father Umar Sheikh. Kutlug Nigar

Khanam was Babur's mother. Both Yunis Khan and his wife, Aishan Daulat Begum, exercised considerable influence over Babur. About the former, Babur writes in his Memoirs: 'He had the most agreeable and refined manners and conversation such as are very seldom to be met with in the most polished society'; and about the latter, 'Few amongst women will have been my grandmother's equals for judgment and culture; she was very wise and far-seeing, and most affairs of mine were carried through by her advice. Babur combined in himself the ferocity of the Mongol, 'the courage and capacity of the Turk', and the polished urbanity of the Persians which were all inherited traits.

Farghana, with Andijan as its capital, was, as above noticed, Umar Sheikh's kingdom. It was a fertile tract of country on the Jagzartes, 50,000 sq. miles in extent (now Khokand in Uzbekistan). But Babur's father was not satisfied with this. So he quarrelled with his eldest brother, Ahmad Mirza, who had received the largest share of the paternal dominions, viz., Samarkand and Bokhara. In the midst of these quarrels, however, Umar Sheikh died of an accidental fall, while feeding his pigeons on Monday 10th June, 1494 (899 A.H).² This fatal event synchronized with the invasion of Farghana by Babur's paternal and maternal uncles, Ahmad and Mahmud Mirza, respectively. Though Babur was hardly twelve years old at that time, he was saved from the critical situation by the loyalty of his subjects.

Babur himself says about Ferghana, "Ferghana is situated in the fifth climate and the limit of settled habitation. On the, east it has Kashghar; on the west, Samarkand; on the south, the mountains of the Badakshan border; on the north, through in former times there must have been the towns such as Almaligh, Almatu and Yangi which in books they write Taraz, at the present time all is desolate, no settled population whatever remaining because of the invasions of Mongols and Uzbegs (Auzbegs). Ferghana is a small country abounding in grain and fruits it is grit round by mountains except on the west, i.e. towards Khujand and Samarkand, and in winter an enemy can enter only that side. The Sihun River (Darya) commonly known as the water of Khujand, comes into the country from north-east, flows westward through it and after passing along the north of Khujand and the south of Fankat (Dr. Rieu writes, that it was also called Shash and, in modern times called Tashkant) now known as Shahrukhiya, turns directly north and goes to Turkistan. It does not join any sea but sinks in to sands, a considerable distance below [the town of] Turkistan.³ Ferghana has seven seprate townships five on the

south and two on the north of Saihun. Of those on the south, one is Andijan. It has a central position and is the capital of Ferghana country”.⁴

As the little country of Fergana possesses a rich soil, in Ferghana, as in Transoxianain general, the older inhabitants of the towns and of the cultivated country were Tajiks, and belonged to no tribe. “

“Andijan has good hunting and fowling; its pheasants grow so surprisingly fat that rumour has it four people could not finish one they were eating with its stew. Andijanians are all turks, not a man in town or bazaar but knows turki. The speech of the people is correct for the pen; hence the writings of Mir Ali-shir Nawai though he was bred and grew up in Hiri (Heart), are one of these dialect good looks are common amongst them. The famous musician Khawaja Yusuf was Andajani. The climate is malarious; in autumn people generally get fever”.⁵

Discussion:

Babur was about eleven years four months old when he succeeded his father in 1494. From his tender to teens and almost constantly afterwards up to end, he had to engage in wars. Supported by his begs, he displayed remarkable courage and presence of mind during these campaigns. At 14, Babur headed off to capture Samarkand—the former imperial capital, a jewel built by craftsmen of Amir Timur Beigh had kidnapped from raids into India, Persia and Arabia. In July 1496, when Ahmad Mirza died, Babur set his heart upon the conquest of Samarkand. However, not until two years later could he make his first effort (July, 1496), and even then not successfully. But this attempt marked an important stage in Babur’s life. Next year 1497 he (Babur) again launched campaign against Samarkand and achieved success after seven-month hard siege but he could not maintain his rule for more than 100 days. He (Babur) fell ill in Samarkand and his illness led to the outbreak of rebellion in Ferghana. In the meantime, a Mongol enemy put his 12-year-old brother Jehangir Mirza to the throne of Fergana. So Babur was homeless; most of his followers had left him. The rebellion in Ferghana which cost him both the kingdoms: ‘Thus for the sake of Farghana I had given up Samarkand, and now found I had lost the one without securing the other’.⁶ With the loss of Samarkand, Babur’s position became quite precarious as he was reduced to the position of a homeless exile.⁷ On this occasion he (Babur) wrote in his diary: “It came very hard on me”.⁸

But Babur was a man of strong will and firm determination; he again tried to capture Samarkand. After a lot of troubles he (Babur) could again occupy Ferghana in 1498 but, due to the selfishness and intrigues of his own people-the Chaghatai Turks, he lost it again in 1500. His loss was made good as Babur occupied Samarkand in the same year (1500) from Shahaibani Khan or Shahi Beg, the chief of the Uzbeks, but he failed to maintain his control over Samarkand for long time. Shahaibani Khan or Shahi Beg launched an expedition against Babur after eight months of his defeat. He defeated him in the battle of Sar-i-Pul, the battle of Sar-i-Pul (April-May 1501) was an early defeat suffered by Babur after he had captured the city of Samarkand for a second time. In the aftermath of the defeat Babur was besieged in Samarkand and was eventually forced to surrender, briefly becoming a powerless wanderer. Babur himself managed to escape by swimming his warhorse across to the north bank of the Kohik River, despite being encumbered by mail armour, and returned to Samarkand. Many of his most able early supporters were killed in the battle, and most of the survivors scattered, so once again Babur was left in possession of Samarkand but without the troops to hold it. Despite this he managed to defend the city against Shaibani for several months before he was forced to surrender, escaping to safety with a small party of supporters.

Shahbani Khan established his sway over Samarkand in 1502; Babur was also forced to give his eldest sister Khazanda Begum in marriage to Shahbani Khan. Shahbani Khan made himself master of Timurid territories of Samarkand, Bukhara, Hissar, Qunduz and Ferghana, as well as Mongol kingdom of Tashkend. Once again his (Babur's) position was converted to the throneless wanderer. For three years Babur had to pass very tough life. He (Babur) fled into the mountains where, living with shepherds. It was now clear that if Babur was to continue the fight against Shaibani Khan he would need a new, safer, base. He chose Kabul, which until 1501 had been ruled by his uncle Ulugh Beg Mirza. The power struggle that followed the death of his uncle ended with Muhammad Muqim, a member of the Arghunid dynasty of Kandahar, on the throne in Kabul. Ironically Babur's attack on Kabul was greatly helped by the threat from Shaibani.

Khosru Shah, a former wazir to the rulers of Samarkand, had ended up as a semi-independent ruler in Kunduz, but his Mongol troops were increasingly aware of the threat from Shaibani, and now decided that Babur offered them a great chance of success. They deserted Khosru, and made up a large part of the army that Babur now led towards Kabul. After a brief

skirmish outside the city, and a siege that lasted for only ten days (October 1504), Muhammad Muqim surrendered, and was allowed to return to his father in Kandahar. Babur was once again an independent ruler (although his powers may have been rather limited by his reliance of Khosru's former troops). Babur has written in his diary about this victory: "it was the last days of the October 1504 that without fight, without an effort, by almighty God's bounty and mercy, I obtained and made subjects to me Kabul and Ghazni and their dependent districts".⁹ His first task was to reward his followers. Both of his brothers were given fiefs - Jahangir got Ghazni and Nasir Mirza got Ningnahr. At this stage Babur had more followers expecting rewards than he had resources, and so he imposed heavy taxes on his new kingdom.¹⁰ According to Babur, "Kabul is situated in the fourth climate and in the midst of cultivated lands. On the east it has the Lamghant, Peshawar, Hashngar and some of the countries of Hindustan. On the west it has the mountain region in which are Karamund and Ghur."¹¹ On the north, separated from it by the range of Hindu-kus, it has been Qunduz and Andar-ab countries. On the south, it has Farmul, Naghr (var. Naghz), Bannu and Afghanistan. "It will be observed that Babur limits the name Afghanistan to the countries inhabited by Afghan tribesmen; they are chiefly those south of the road from Kabul to Pashawar".¹² The summer of 1505 was a difficult time for Babur. First his mother died, then he was struck down by a fever, and finally Kabul was badly damaged by an earthquake. At the start of 1506 the senior member of the Timurid house was Sultan Husain Mirza Baiqara, ruler of Khorasan and sultan of Herat. For some time he had ignored the threat from Shaibani, but now he issued a rallying call to the remaining members of the dynasty to unite against the Uzbeks. Babur accepted this call to arms, and prepared to join up with the Sultan's army, but on 5 May 1506 Sultan Husain died. He was succeeded by joint heirs, Badi-uz-Zaman Mirza and Muzaffar-i-Husain Mirza, who ruled together. Babur still decided to join their army, although he didn't reach them until 26 October 1506.¹³

By this point it was clear that there was no urgency behind the campaign, and the brothers soon returned to Herat. Babur was forced to accompany them, spending twenty days in Herat before escaping from his hosts and making a dangerous trip across the snow-bound mountains to return to Kabul. 1507 as Babur approached Kabul he discovered that the city was held against him by a group of rebels, although the citadel was still in his hands. Babur was able to get a message into the city, and coordinated a joint attack on the rebels, regaining

control of the city. Babur's rule was made more secure by the death of Jahangir and Nasir's defeat at Khamchan in 1507 which forced him to abandon Badakhshan and return to Kabul.

The news from Khorasan was not so good. Shaibani responded to the events of 1506 by invading, catching the ruling brothers by surprise. An army led by the Governor of Kandahar was defeated at Maruchak, and after that resistance came to an end. Herat fell to the Uzbeks, and Babur was left as the only important ruler of the Timurid house. This began a period in which Babur was greatly concerned with the affairs of Kandahar. It began when Shah Beg Arghun and Muqim Beg Arghun, the heirs of the defeated governor, offered Kandahar to Babur. He accepted, and marched towards the city at the head of his army. At this point the Arghuns changed their minds, and decided to accept Uzbek rule. Babur defeated the brothers in a battle outside Kandahar, and occupied the city, leaving his brother in command before returning to Kabul. Shaibani arrived soon after this, and laid siege to the city. Babur was so spooked by this that he prepared for a move into India, but the siege came to an end when Shaibani's harem was threatened. The Uzbek army withdrew, and the Arghuns regained command of their city.

Until this point Babur had used the title of Mirza, in common with the rest of the Timurids. With most of the family now out of power he now decided to adopt a new title, and declared himself to be Padshah. In the country of Kabul, there are hot and cold districts close to one another. In one day, a man may go out of the town of Kabul to where snow never falls, or he may go, in two sidereal hours, to where it never thaws, unless when the heats are such that it cannot possibly lie. Fruits of hot and cold climates are to be had in the districts near the town. Amongst those of the cold climate, there are had in the town the grape, pomegranate, apricot, apple, and quince. After the events of 1507 Babur must have believed that he would never see Samarkand again, but an unexpected turn of events gave him one more chance to capture Tamerlane's old capital (Samarkand). In 1509 Shaibani provoked Shah Ismail Safavi, the leader of a resurgent Persia. Towards the end of 1510 the Persians caught Shaibani Khan or Shahi Beg outside Merv, defeating and killing him. Rebellions broke out across his former empire, and Babur was invited to intervene.

Early in 1511 Babur reached Kunduz, where he found a large force of Mongol mercenaries who had deserted the Uzbeks after Shaibani's death. At first they wanted to replace Babur with Sultan Sayid, but he refused to take part in any revolt against Babur, who had

provided him with refuge from Shaibani. Babur agreed to let Sayid attempt to retake Andijan, and the two men separated on good terms. Babur then advanced north towards Hisar, but he found a strong Uzbek army and was forced to retreat. Back at Kunduz Babur was reunited with his elder sister Khanzada. She had been forced to marry Shaibani as the price of Babur's safety after his second occupation of Samarkand in 1501. Both Shaibani Khan or Shahi Beg and her second husband Saiyid Hadi had been killed by the Persians, and they now returned her to her brother.

Babur took advantage of this chance to gain an ally and sent an ambassador to Shah Ismail Safavi of Persia, a Shia ruler. An alliance was soon agreed, in which Babur was very much the junior partner. The terms of the alliance included one that would soon be very damaging. The Shah was a dedicated Shite, and he insisted that Babur adopt the Shia faith and impose it on the Sunni inhabitants of Samarkand. This agreement would soon cost Babur the support of the inhabitants of Samarkand, and to make things worse Persian support probably didn't play a major part in his upcoming victory. Before his ambassador had returned from Persia Babur advanced back towards Hisar. A month long stand-off followed, during which time Babur's ambassador returned, possibly with a small Persian contingent. The Uzbeks realised that Babur was probably weaker than they were, swam across a river and forced him to retreat from Pul-i-Sanghin (Stone bridge) to Abdara. The resulting battle ended in a major victory for Babur. Only after it was he joined by a strong Persian force, which took part in the triumphal advance to Bokhara.¹⁴ Samarkand was now open to Babur, but before taking the city he dismissed his Persian allies. Finally, in 8 October 1511, Babur entered Samarkand for the third time, this time in triumph.¹⁵ Babur's time in Samarkand can't have been pleasant. Initially greeted as a liberator, the reaction to him turned hostile when it became clear that he intended to honour his agreement with the Shah, even if he didn't persecute the Sunni population of Samarkand. At the same time his refusal to persecute the Sunni angered the Shah, who dispatched an army towards Samarkand to bring Babur into line. By the time the Persians arrived Babur had already lost control of the city. The Uzbeks had recovered from the shock of defeat in 1510-11, and launched a two pronged assault on Babur's new empire. The main army attacked Tashkent, while 3,000 men moved towards Bokhara. Babur led a small army against this second force, and was defeated at the battle of Kul-i-Malik (May 1512).¹⁶ He managed to escape to Bokhara, but was forced to abandon the city and return to Samarkand.¹⁷ It quickly became clear

that Samarkand could not be held either, and Babur was forced to abandon the city for the third and final time (although this wasn't at all clear at the time).

The Persian army, under Najm Sani, arrived at the border of Khorasan to find Babur a refuge at Hisar. Instead of chastising him, the Persians decided to help him. The two armies were combined and advanced towards Bukhara. It soon became clear that Babur had very little influence in the army. After capturing Qarshi Najm massacred the entire population of the city, not just the Uzbek garrison. He then allowed himself to be diverted from the advance towards Bukhara into a siege of Ghaj-davan. This gave the Uzbeks time to concentrate against him, and after a siege that may have lasted four months the Persians were defeated in battle in the suburbs of Ghaj-davan (12 November 1512). Babur was able to escape with the rearguard, but Najm Sani the finance minister of Shah Ismail Safavi was killed.¹⁸ This defeat ended any real chance Babur had of retaking Samarkand. He probably spent most of 1513 at Kunduz, hoping to be able to regain Hisar, but early in 1514 abandoned this idea and returned to Kabul. This city had been left in the hands of his brother Nasir, who in a rare example of filial loyalty handing it back to Babur without any arguments and returned to Ghazni. In the next year Nasir died, and an obscure revolt broke out at Ghazni, which ended when Babur defeated the rebels in an open battle.

Although Babur continued to sit on the throne of Kabul for another twelve years but he (Babur) paid his utmost attention to Indian expeditions during this time. Babur learnt various new techniques of warfare and diplomacy making proper use of mobile cavalry; he (Babur) learnt a novel method of warfare known as Tulghuma from the Uzbeks. The Persians taught him the use of firearms and artillery. All these achievements made him more strong and effective against India.¹⁹ Babur's failure in Central Asia left him no alternative for Babur, but turns his attention to Hindustan (referring to the Ganges plain and the Punjab) to fulfil his attention of founding an empire. This area had been briefly and brutally conquered by Tamerlane in 1398, and Babur would claim this gave him a legitimate claim to the area as Tamerlane's most important remaining descendant.

India must have been a very tempting target for Babur. Northern Indian had been dominated by the Sultanate of Delhi, but the sultans had been steadily losing power throughout the fourteenth century, and in 1398 Tamerlane's (Timur Beg) invasion has smashed what remaining power it had. A Sultan continued to occupy the throne in Delhi until Babur finally deposed the last one, but their authority rarely extended far outside the city and its immediate

surroundings. Independent Muslim states appeared to the west of Delhi, in Sind, Multan and the Punjab, each ruled by an Afghan family. These Muslim states were bordered to the south by the principalities of Rajputana. Another band of Muslim powers were to be found to the south of Rajputana.

The most significant step towards Babur's conquest of Hindustan came at some point between 1514 and 1519, during a gap in his memoirs. In this period he secured the services of Ustad Ali, an Ottoman Turk, who became his first Master of Ordnance. Ustad Ali's job was to equip Babur's army with gunpowder weapons, and by 1519 we read of matchlocks and artillery pieces being used during the siege of Bajaur. Babur began to move east (Hindustan) in 1518, capturing the fortress of Chaghansarai (The siege of Chaghansarai of 1518 was an early step in Babur's attempts to conquer an empire in Hindustan. Chaghansarai is now known as Asadabad, and is to be found to the north-east of Asadabad, just inside Afghanistan) late in the year. In January 6, 1519 he besieged Bajaur, further to the east, capturing the fortress with the help of his matchlocks and artillery. In the aftermath of this victory the defenders of the fort were massacred, officially because they were heathens and rebels, but probably to send a message to the Afghans on Babur's invasion route into India. In 1503 while he (Babur) was a guest of the headman of the village at Dikhkat in Transxonia during one of his periodical wanderings, Babur, for the first time heard from the lips of a contemporary, the headman's grandmother, aged 111, the story of Timur's invasion of India. His imagination was kindled, and he (Babur) formed the resolution of one day repeating the Indian exploits of his great ancestor (Timur). But it was finally foiled that he (Babur) decided to try his luck in the south-east.²⁰

Babur states that he made five expeditions into Hindustan, starting in 1519 and ending with the victory at Panipat in 1526. The first began in February 1519 as an extension of an expedition against Afghan tribes. Babur crossed the Indus just to the east of modern Mardan, and then moved south, crossing the Salt Range to reach Bhira (modern Bhera) on the Jehlam River (the most westerly of the five rivers of the Punjab). Babur made it clear to his men that they were not to pillage the areas they were passing through, as Babur claimed them as his own. This paid off for the moment, as the people of Bhira submitted to Babur. He (Babur) writes in his autobiography, "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan and as these several countries had once held by Turks, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them in to my hands whether peacefully or by force."²¹

At the start of March 1519 Babur decided to send an envoy, Mulla Murshid, to Ibrahim Lodi Ghazali Afghan, the handsome sultan of Delhi Sultanate at Delhi to ask him to surrender those territories which from old times had belonged to the Turks should be given up to me (Babur). Mulla Murshid (the envoy of Babur) reached as far as Lahore, where he was detained by Daulat Khan, officially Ibrahim's governor of the Punjab. Daulat Khan Lodi would later play a major part in Babur's invasion of India, but for the moment his only role was to prevent the messenger from reaching Delhi. Few months later Mulla Murshid returned safely to Kabul without bringing a reply.²² Babur quitted India, leaving Bhira, the border land of Hindustan²³ in the charge of Hindu Beg; but the latter was soon (1519) expelled by natives. Before the outbreak of the first battle of Panipat, Babur made five expeditions against India in order to establish his control over frontiers in March and September 1519, 1520, 1524 and 1525. Babur's route onwards took him from the northern Punjab to Sirhind, then on to Ambala, about 100 miles to the north of Delhi.²⁴ Ibrahim Lodi was aware of his advance, and gathered a large army of around 100,000 men and 1,000 elephants, with which he advanced to Delhi, and then slowly north from the city. Before reaching Ambala Babur learnt about a detachment of Lodi troops that was moving from Hisar-firuza towards either Ibrahim or Babur's right flank. On February, 26, 1526 the battle of Hisar-Firuza was the first clash between Babur and the forces of the Sultanate of Delhi during the campaign that ended at Panipat two months later. Babur's line of advance took him to Sirhind, roughly 120 miles to the north of Delhi,²⁵ from where he advanced south towards Ambala. During this march he was informed that Sultan Ibrahim Lodi was north of Delhi with the main army, while a second army was moving from Hisar-firuza. Hisar-firuza was hundred miles to the north-west of Delhi, on the right flank of Babur's planned line of advance. The army was being led by Hamid Khan khasa-khail, a member of the same family as the Sultan, and the military collector for Hisar-firuza, and consisted of the army from that place and from its neighbourhood. Babur sent scouts out to find both enemy camps. When the scouts returned to his camp (25 February 1526) Babur decided to send part of his army to attack the force from Hisar-firuza, which had now advanced 20 to 30 miles from the town. Babur chose to detach his entire right wing and part of the centre, all under the command of his son and heir Humayun (Eldest son of Babur), for whom this would be his first battle.

Babur's army commanded by Humayun left the main camp at dawn on 26 February 1526. When he came close to the enemy he dispatched 100 to 150 of his men ahead to act as

scouts. They became involved in a battle with Hamid Khan's force, but when the rest of Humayun's force appeared on the scene they turned and fled. Humayun's men captured unhorsed between 100-200 prisoners beheading half of them on the battlefield, and 7 or 8 elephants were captured.²⁶

News of the victory reached Babur's camp on 2 March 1526, and the messenger was rewarded with a horse from the royal stable, something described as a 'special head-to-foot', and promise of further reward. The victorious prince returned on 5 March 1526, bringing hundred prisoners and eight elephants. The unfortunate captives were then shot by Babur's matchlockmen, to send a message to Ibrahim's supporters.²⁷ After this contest Babur moved south to Shahabad, before turning east to reach the River Jumna opposite Sarsawa, where he began the final advance south towards Delhi. Ibrahim was now in or close to his final camp, from where he sent 5 to 6,000 men onto the eastern bank of the Jumna (into the Doab, the area between the Jumna and the Ganges). Babur responded by sending part of his army to deal with this new threat, defeating it at an unnamed location in Doab, The battle in the Doab of 2 April 1526 was a minor victory at an unnamed location that saw Babur defeat a detachment from Ibrahim Lodi's army that had been sent across the River Jumna into the Doab. The two armies now closed in on each other close to the town of Panipat. Although Ibrahim Lodi vastly outnumbered Babur's army, he was unwilling to risk a battle, and for about a week the two armies faced each other at a distance of a few miles. Babur attempted to break the deadlock with a night attack on 19 to 20 April, which almost ended in disaster, but it does seem to have provoked Ibrahim Lodi, for on 21 April he finally advanced to the attack. The resulting battle of Panipat (21 April 1526) was a crushing victory for Babur against apparently overwhelming odds.

The Battle of Panipat was fought on 21st April 1526 near the small village of panipat, in the present day state of Haryana, an area that has been the site of a number of decisive battles for the control of Northern India since the twelfth century. Babur halted at Shahabad for several days, and, from there, 'sent fit persons to Ibrahim Lodi's camp to procure intelligence.' A cavalry division, division, sent by Ibrahim to words Panipat, was also routed by Babur's men. At Shahabad Babur (Babar) came to know that Ibrahim Lodi (Lodhi) had come out of Delhi at the head of one lakh strong army and one thousand war elephants; but according to Davis Paul K that Ibrahim Lodi had only 300 war elephants,²⁸ and was advancing slowly towards the Mughal forces 'by amile or two at a time, and halting two or three days at each station.' Babur also

ordered his armies to move forward at a slow pace and, ultimately, selected, as the battlefield, the vast space of land between Panipat and river Jumna which flowed at a distance of about two or three miles from the town in those days. The town of Panipat, therefore, constituted but a minor part of the battle-field. The inhabitants of the town and the adjoining fled for their lives on the approach of the armies.

Babur got sufficient time from April 12 to 19, during which he (Babur) arranged his forces in the battle-array. Babur personally commanded the 'centre' (ghul) of the army which was protected by a long line of seven hundred wheeled carts, previously by his men for the transport of their baggage. The wheels of the adjoining carts were tied together by ropes made of raw hides, and, in between them, sufficient gap, ranging from sixty to seventy yards in width, was left in order to allow 100-150 to charge through without any convenience. The frontage of the 'centre' was cleared of all the obstacles by the felling of the trees, etc.²⁹ Babur had 20 to 24 pieces of artillery, his artillery was commanded by two famous Ottoman gunners (central Asian) Ustad Ali-Quli and Mustafa Rumi.³⁰ Regarding the fielding of artillery, Babur writes that the gun-carriages were connected together 'in Ottoman fashion but using ropes of raw hide instead of chains.'³¹ Babur took five or six days in getting the whole apparatus arranged while on the move towards Panipat. The artillery was supported by an advance guard, consisting of the most efficient mobile cavalry, and commanded by Khusrau Kukultash and Mohammad Ali Jang-Jang.³² The right wing of the army was commanded by Khwaja Kalan and Mohammad Humayun, while the left wing, which was under the charge of Muhammad Sultan Mirza and Mehandi Khawaja. On the extreme right of the right was posted the right 'tulghama' (Dividing the whole army into various units) party and on the extreme left of the left wing was stationed the left 'tulghama' party. Behind the battlefield, Babur had kept a reserve force under the charge of Abdul Aziz, the master of Horse.³³

Sultan Ibarim Lod's army on the other hand, numbered according to Babur, one lakh soldiers and one thousand war elephants. But considering the fact that there used to be in that age a number of camp-followers and servants for every combatant, the effective fighting strength of Ibarim's army could not have been more than forty thousand. They were divided into four traditional divisions, -the advance guard, the centre, the right wing and the left wing. The armies came face to face on 12th April, 1526, but neither side took up the offensive for eight days. During the night of 20th April Babur sent out 4,000-5,000 of his men to make a night attack on

the Afghan camp which failed in its object. But it provoked Sultan Ibrarim who gave orders for his troops to advance next morning.

The battle was fought on 21st April 1526, Ibrarim Lodhi ordered his army to move forward at a quick pace, but it had to stop suddenly when it came near Babur's fort like defenses. This caused some confusion among the Afghan troops. Taking advantage of it, Babur immediately ordered his flanking parties to wheel round and attack the enemy in the rear. Ibrahim Lodhi now ordered an attack on Babur's left wing which found itself in difficulty. Babur quickly sent reinforcement from the centre which succeeded in repelling the Afghan right wing. The battle now became general and Babur ordered his gunners to open fire. Thus the lodhi army was surrounded and overwhelmed. It found itself exposed to artillery shot in front and arrows on either flank or the rear. In spite of their out-maneuvred and out classed in, the Indian army under Ibrarim Lodi fought valiantly.³⁴ The battle lasted from 9 o'clock in the morning till noon, when the superior strategy and generalship won the day. Ibrarim Lodi was fought on bravely, along with a group of 5000-6000 around him, all of them died fighting along with their leader Ibrarim Lodi "Babur in his memories, at the time of zahur (mid- day prayer) Tahir tabibzi ,seen the corpse of Ibrarim Lodi among the heap of dead bodies and he (Tahir Tabazi) cut his head and brought before me."³⁵ Babur paid a tribute to his bravery by burying Ibrarim Lodi on the spot with honour. According to Babur's own estimate 15,000 or 16,000 men were killed in the field, Raja Bikramajit ,the ruler of Gwalior was among those, but it came to be known, later in Agra from the statement of Hindustanis 40-50,000 may have died in that battle.³⁶ 4000 of his (Babur's) troops were killed or wounded in the battle. The hardest part of the battle lasted from early in the morning until about noon. Ibrahim himself was killed during the fighting, although his body was not discovered until later in the afternoon. Babur dispatched a force towards Agra to try and catch the fleeing Sultan, before sending Humayun with a larger force to occupy the city and seize Ibrahim's treasury. According to Babur's memoirs his men estimated that they had killed 15 to16, 000 of the enemy, although the inhabitants of Agra estimated the losses at 40 - 50,000. Many of the survivors were captured, and were made prisoners. With a small force, Babur achieved a decisive victory at Panipat. His superior generalship and excellent discipline of his troops accounted for his success. Experience and a master of the art of warfare and his effective field strategy gave him a definite advantage over the enemy. There was a unity of purpose and action in Babur's chiefs and soldiers who had confidence in themselves and their

great leader, for whom they were prepared to lay down their lives. Moreover, he (Babur) and his soldiers were seasoned warriors, who had seen many battles and were quick to understand the enemy situation. The Afghan weakness also contributed to the success of Babur. Sultan Ibarim did not lack courage nor was the short of resources in men and material but was an inexperienced general and his army lacked organisation and discipline .Babur records that Ibarim Lodi was ‘was a young man of no experience, negligent in all his movements who marched without order, halted or retired without plan and engaged in battle without foresight’.³⁷

It is generally told that Babur’s guns proved decisive in battle, firstly because Ibarim Lodi lacked any field artillery, but also because the sound of the cannon frightened Lodi’s elephants, causing them to trample Lodi’s own men. At about 400 yards Babur’s cannon opened fire, noise and smoke from the artillery the Afghans and the attack lost momentum. Here the Afghans first time met the real weapons of Mongols (Mughal) ‘Turko-Mongol-Bow. ’Its superiority lay in the fact that it was the nobles, of the first worriers. Such a bow in the hands of a Mongol (Mughal) worrier would shoot three times as rapidly as musket and could kill at 200 yards. Attacking from three sides the Afghans jumped in to each other. Elephants hearing noise of cannon at close range ran widely out of control and trampled their own soldiers, after being frightened by the explosion of gunpowder.³⁸

The battle of Panipat occupies a place of great importance in the history of medieval India. It gave a crushing blow to the Afghans and marked the end of the Lodi dynasty. It led to the foundation of Mughal Empire whose illustrious monarchs shed the foreign outlook and played a great role in evolving a new cultural pattern of Indian society based on harmony and cooperation between Hindus and Muslims. Of course, the advent of Mughals gave a serious setback to the rising power of the Hindu chieftains who were aspiring to re-assert their political supremacy on national scale. This decisive battle gave an added importance of the town of Panipat as well, it became an ‘uncanny spot which no man dared to pass after dark wailing and groans and other supernatural sounds were heard there at nights; and the historian Abdul Qadir Badayuni, a man of veracity in his way, crossing the haunted one night with some friends, heard the dreadful voices, and fell to repeating the holy names of God as a protection the awful influences around him.’³⁹

After the victory in the bloody battle, Babur directed prince Humayun ‘to ride fast and light to Agra, to get the place in to their hands and to mount guard over the treasure’ while

Mahedi Khwaja, Muhammad Sultan Mirza and Aadil Sultan were ordered to take the charge of the forts and treasure of Delhi.⁴⁰ Next day, Babur did find time to relax on the bank of the river Jumna while his forces made a triumphant entry in to Delhi. On Friday, 27 April 1526 the Khutba was read in his (Babur's) name in the Friday prayers in the Jamia Masjid of the city (Delhi). Marching with the main army, Babur halted on the Jumna, opposite Delhi, in order to visit the tombs of Muslim saints (first he visited the tomb of Hazrat Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya) and the heroes first he (Babur) visited the tomb of Ghiyassudin Balban the Allahudin Khilji.' On Thursday 10th May about the hour of afternoon prayers Babur entered Agra and took up the residence in Sultan Ibharams palace'. Here Babur received from Humayun, among other treasures, the famous diamond Koh-i-noor ; it weighed 320 ratis (105 caret or 21.6g) and was valued at two and 'a half days' food for the whole world'⁴¹ Babur was very pleased with the performance of Humayun and returned the diamond to him along with 70, 00,000 dams. A paragona of the value of seven lakhs was bestowed to Ibharams Lodi's mother. Paraganas were also given to each of her Amirs. She was conducted with all her effects to a palace, which was assigned for her residence, about a kos below Agra.⁴² Every man who had fought received his share, and even the traders and camp followers were remembered in the general bounty. Besides this the emperor's (Babur) other sons and relations, though absent, had presents of gold, silver and jewels. Friends in Ferghana, Khurasan, Kashghar ,and Persia were not forgotten; and holy men in Heart and Samarkand ,and Mecca and Medina, received substantial offerings.⁴³ A silver coin (shahrukhi) was given to, every soul-men, women, children, bond or freeman in Kabul and Badakshan valley.⁴⁴ So generously did Babur distribute the accumulated treasures of generations which he (Babur) at Delhi, Agra and Gawalior and left so little for himself, that he (Babur) was called in jest a Qalanar (beggar-friar). According to Dr. R.P. Tripathi, "This victory sealed the fate of Lodhi dynasty as effectively as his ancestor Timur had done of the Tughluqs and told seriously on the morale and already weak organisation of the Afghans. The victory at Panipat was a landmark in the foundation of the Mughal Empire which in grandeur, power and culture rivalled the Roman Empire."⁴⁵

The battle of Panipat had given Babur the throne of Delhi and Agra; but he (Babur) had still grave problems to solve and serious difficulties to surmount, before he could consolidate his position. His officers and soldiers, being disgusted with the excessive heat, felt home sick and desired to return Kabul. Babur's writings show that the summer of 1526 was extremely

oppressive and many men died of the heat stroke. If they left, Babur's empire would collapse. To persuade them to stay, he (Babur) had to use every method of persuasion. He (Babur) addressed them with his characteristic eloquence, appealing to their sense of honour and pointed to them the folly of leaving the rich fruits of an empire, which they had acquired after a life of toil and sufferings. He (Babur) said, "And now what force compels, and what hardship oblige us, without any visible cause, after having worn out our life in an accomplishing the desired achievement, to abandon and fly from our conquests and retreat back to Kabul with every symptom of disappointment and discomfiture?" The appeal had desired effect and all expressed their determination to stay with him. Only a few, including a leading officer, Khwaja Kalan, desired to return. Khwaja Kalan had become so home-sick that he inscribed on the walls of his residence in Delhi: "If safe and sound I cross the Sind, Blacken my face ere I wish for Hind".

The second problem of Babur was to create confidence among the people, who had run away from their houses and holdings in the towns and villages. Babur says, "All the inhabitants fled in terror, so that we could find grain or provender, either for ourselves or our horses. The villagers, out of hostility and hatred, had taken to rebellion, thieving and robbery." He gave assurances of security to the people and sent officers to restore peace and order. The third problem of Babur was to subjugate the Afghan jagirdars and chiefs, who still held extensive territories from Kannauj to Bihar and roamed about with their armed followers. At first he adopted a conciliatory policy to win them over many were subjugated with sword.⁴⁶

Babar was fascinated so much with the beauty of Indian landscape, its healthy climate and riches that he made up his mind to adopt it as his permanent home. He (Babur) had become the master of north-western India, including Delhi albeit he could by no means be called the emperor of India. In order to earn that title he had yet to contend with many other Indian powers. The two biggest dangers Babur had to faced was, first from the side of eastern Afghans and second from the side of Rana Sanga. (Maharana Sangram Singh) . Rana Sanga was the ruler of Mewar, a region lying within the present day Indian state of Rajasthan; between 1509-1527 he was a scion of the Sisodia clan of Suryavanshi Rajputs. He defended his kingdom bravely from the repeated invasions from the Muslim rulers of Delhi, Gujrat, and Malwa. He was one of the most powerful ruler of northern India in those days.⁴⁷ He (Rana sanga) was a man of indomitable spirit and despite losing on arm, one eye and received numerous other grave injuries he (Rana Sanga) carried on with great valour. His chivalory reflected when he (Rana sangs) treated Sultan

Muhammad of Mandu with generosity and restored his (Sultan Muhammad) kingdom even when he was defeated by and taken as a prisoner by Rana in 1519. Rana Sanga and Medini Rai of Chanderi were two tough warriors under whose leadership the Rajputs had determined to drive out the insolent invader. The Muslims like Hassan Khan Mewati and Muhammad Lodi (brother of Ibrarim Lodhi) had joined with the Rana Sanga, made it appear that it was not the war of the Hindus against the Mohammedans but a united national effort against a common enemy of the country. Ahmad Yadgar, in his *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, writes: "Rana Sanga who was that time a powerful chief sent message to Hassan Khan saying, "the Mughals have entered Hindustan, have slain Ibrarim, and taken possession of the country; it is evident that they will likewise send an army against both of us; if you will you will side with me we will be alive and not suffer them to take possession."⁴⁸ Now Sanga represented the Rajput-Afghan alliance, the proclaimed objective of which was expel Babur, and to restore the Lodhi empire. Hence, the battle of Khanwa can hardly be seen as a religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims, or even as a Rajput bid to establish Rajput hegemony over North India.

On February 11, 1527, the forces of Rana Sanga and Babur came face to face with each other in Khanua a small village near Sikri about 60 km from Agra. Rana Sanga wanted to overthrow Babur, whom he considered to be a foreigner ruling in India, and also to extend the Rajput territories by annexing Delhi and Agra. The Rajput force, which was marching rapidly to Khanua, was many times greater than the Mughal army. It numbered about 80,000 soldiers and 1,000 war elephants the Rana was supported by 120 chiefs such as Haruti, Jalor and Dungeerpor from south and west Rajasthan, and Dhundhar and Amber from the east. Rao Ganga of Mewar did not join himself, but sent a contingent under Raimal, and Ratan Singh of Merta. Medani Rao of Chanderi in Malwa also joined, including Mahmud Lodi, the younger brother of Sikander Lodi, whom the Afghans had proclaimed their sultan and Hassan Khan Mewati the ruler of Mewar also joined with him.

The news of the large army and the reports of Rajput valour disheartened the Mughal soldiers. The Rajputs, energetic, chivalrous, fond of battle and bloodshed, animated by a strong national spirit, were ready to meet, face to face, the boldest veterans of the camp and were at all times prepared to lay down their life for their honour.⁴⁹ The depression of Mughal soldiers turned in to panic, when a noted astrologer, Muhammad Sharif, who had just come from Kabul, made ominous predictions regarding the results of the battle. So great was the panic in the camp that

Babur wrote that ‘No manly word, no brave counsel was heard from anyone, wazir, amir or individual.’ With firm faith in god and confidence in himself, Babur remained unmoved and made a stirring speech to restore morale and instil hope in his men. He (Babur), however, rose to the occasion; in order to boost the morale of his forces, he (Babur) declared Jihad (holy war) against the Kafirs, offered prayers to God for success, and, in a dramatic performance, renounced wine for life, broke all the wine pots of gold and silver and distributed among the poor, an alms house was built on the spot. He also promised to remit tamgha (stamp duty) on all the Muslim subject of his dominions. He (Babur) asked them to have firm faith in God and confidence in themselves, and to live or die with honour. His (Babur) address is worth quoting:

“Nobleman and soldiers, every man that comes in to the world is subject to dissolution. When we are passed away and gone, only God survives unchangeable. Whoever comes to the feast of life, must, before it is over, drink from the cup of death. He who arrives at the inn of morality must one day inevitably take his departure from his house of sorrow-the world. How much better it is to die with honour than to live with infamy?” “With fame even die, I am content; fame let be mine, since my body is deaths.”

The highest God has been propitious to us and has now placed us in such a situation that if we fall in the field we die a martyr’s death; if we survive we rise victorious, the victorious, the avengers of the cause of God.”⁵⁰ Babur’s appeal had the desired effect; his begs and soldiers swore on the Quran and by the divorce of their wives that they would fight to the bitter end.

After a few skirmishes, the two mighty armies finally clashed on 17 March 1527 at Khanwa in pitched battle. ⁵¹ Babur had pushed on another mile or two, and was busy setting the camp, when the news came that was advancing. Instantly every man was sent to his post, the line of chained guns and wagons was strengthened, and the army drawn up for the fight. A special feature in the disposition was the great strength of the reserves. Babur himself commanded the centre, assisted by his cousin. Chin Timur, a son of Ahmad, the late Khan of Mughalistan (Mongolistan). Humayun led the right, and the emperors (Babur’s) son-in-law, Mahdi Khwaja, the left. Among the minor commanders was a grandson of sultan Hussain of Heart; and the Lodi ‘Ala-ad-din (Allaudin) the claimant to the crown of Delhi, whom Babur still used as a figure-head. The Rajputs had 80,000 troops , and the chiefs of Bhilsa, rated at 30,000 horses, of Mewat Dongerpur, and Chanderi ,with about 12,000 each, brought the flower of the Rajput chivalry at

their backs; and Muhammad Lodi the brother of Sultan Ibharm another claimant to the throne, had collected 10,000 mercenaries to support his pretensions.

‘The battle began, about half-past nine in the morning, by a desperate charge made by the Rajputs on Babur’s right. Bodies of the reserve were pushed on to its assistance; and Mustafa Rumi, who commanded one portion of the artillery [and matchlocks] on the right of the centre, opened a fire upon the assailants. Still, new bodies of the enemy poured on undauntedly, and new detachments from the reserve were sent to resist them. The battle was no less desperate on the left, to which also it was found necessary to dispatch repeated parties from the reserve. When the battle had lasted several hours, and still continued to rage, Babur sent orders to flanking columns to wheel round and charge; and he soon after ordered the guns to advance, and, by a simultaneous movement, the household troops and cavalry stationed behind the cannon were ordered to gallop out on right and left of the matchlock men in the centre who also moved forward and continued their fire, hastening to fling themselves with all their fury on the enemy’s centre.⁵² When this was observed in the wings they also advanced. These unexpected movements made at the same moment threw the enemy in to confusion. Their centre was shaken; the men who were displaced by the attack made in flank on the wings and rear were forced upon the centre and crowded together. Still the gallant Rajputs were not appalled. They made repeated desperate attacks on the emperors (Babur’s) centre, in hopes of recovering the day; but were bravely and steadily received, and swept away in great numbers. [Ustad Ali’s “huge balls” did fearful execution among the “heathen”] towards evening the Rajput defeat was complete and slaughter was consequently dreadful. The fate of the battle was decided. Nothing remained for the Rajputs but to force their way through the bodies of the enemy that were now in their camp, and detached a strong body of horse with orders to pursue the broken troops of the confederates without halting; to cut up all they met, and to prevent them from reassembling.⁵³ Rana Sanga was himself badly wounded and taken away unconscious from the the battlefield by his (Rana Sanga) faithful followers. He (Rana) was impersonated by Jhala Ajja. The decesive proved to be a poor substitute, however (Rana) died in 30 January 1528 at Baswa Mewar’s Northern border. A number of other notable chiefs including Hassan Khan Mewati, fell on the field, but Muhammad Lodi escaped safely. The next day Babur mounted a platform prepared over the dead bodies of the Rajputs and proclaimed victory by assuming the title of Ghazi ‘victor in the holy war against the Kafirs.

The battle of Khanwa which lasted for ten hours was one of the most memorable battles in Indian history. Hardly was any other battle so stubbornly contested with its issue hanging in the balance till almost its very end. The battle of Khanwa crushed the great confederacy of the Hindus. It was Babur's second decisive victory in India. The defeat of the Rajputs at Kanua deprived them of the opportunity to regain political ascendancy in the country for ever. . According to K. V. Krishna Rao, Babur won the battle because of his "superior generalship" and modern tactics: the battle was one of the first in India that featured cannons. Rao also notes that Rana Sanga faced "treachery" when a Silhadi man converted to Islam and joined Babur's army with a garrison of 6,000 soldiers.⁵⁴ The Mughal kingdom was firmly established and did not face any danger of liquidation during the life time of Babur. 'Hitherto' observes Rushbrook Williams, 'the occupation of Hindustan might have been looked upon as a mere episode in Babur's career of adventure, but from henceforth, it became the keynote of his (Babur) activities for the remainder of his life. Thereafter, Babur had never 'to stake his throne and life' upon the issue of 'a stricken field'. Babur spread his forces throughout his dominions in order to suppress the disaffected nobles and bring the outlying regions under his effective control.⁵⁵

Before the battle of Khanwa Babur had promised that anyone who wanted to return to Kabul after a victory would be free to do so. Many of the men who now chose to take advantage of that offer had been serving under Humayun, and Babur decided to send his older son and heir back to Kabul, where he would spend the next few years acting as Babur's deputy. This move would also trigger a plot that must have darkened Babur's final years. Babur's next task was to recover control of the areas that had rebelled or been taken during the campaign against the Rana Sanga. On the eve of the battle of Khanwa Chandwar Rapari and Etwah were recovered. Alwar the capital of Mewat was occupied by him (Babur) on April 7, 1527.⁵⁶ This was achieved with surprising ease most of the rebels fled at the approach of Imperial troops, and Husain Khan Lohani, one of the more able of Babur's opponents, drowned while crossing the Jumna. Another of his more persistent opponents, Biban, had besieged Luknur (probably modern Shahabad in Rampur), but retreated when Babur's approached.

Babur's next move was against the fortress of Chanderi, a former Muslim possession that had been taken by Rana Sangha during his wars with Ibrahim Lodi, and given to Medin Rao.

Medni Rao, the Rajput chief of Chanderi and a close associate of Rana Sanga, had escaped from Khanua; he took shelter in the fort of Chanderi with a contingent of about 5,000

Rajputs, Chanderi had formely belonged to the sultans of Mandu, when Rana Sanga advanced with an army against Ibharam Lodi as far as Dholpur, the prince's Amirs rose against him and on that occasion Chanderi fell in to the Ranas hands. He (Rana) bestowed it to one Medini Rao, a Hindu who had served one of the former Muslim rulers as prime minister.

The geographical position of the town Chanderi gave it political, commercial and strategic importance since the town lay on the boarders of Malwa and Bundalkhand. It commanded trade routes from Malwa to the rest of northern India. Being a commercial centre the town was prosperous. Within the walls of the town there were about 12,000 mosques, 284 markets and 14,000 well built houses. It had a strong fort situated on a rock two hundred thirty feet high. Its ruler had owed allegiance to Rana Sangram sing the ruler of Mewar. He had supported the Rana in the battle of Khanua. After the defeat and discomfiture of the Rana in the battle, Babur asked Rao to surrender the fort of Chanderi to the Mughals. It is difficult to say how for Babur's demand was just. However, failing to get the fort of Chanderi peacefully, he (Babur) sent a strong army against Medini Rao. The latter thought that if no immediate action was taken against him, (Medni Rao) he might become powerful enemy and be a constant menace for the Mughal Empire.⁵⁷

On December, 1527 Babur started from Agra towards Chanderi, passing through Jalsar, Anwar Komar and Kalpi he (Babur) halted at Bhander twenty miles east of Dutia on the 20th Jan. 1528 Baburreached to Chanderi. He took up his position near Hauz Miani which was nearer the fort. On the same day early in the morning when preparations for the final assault were complete Mir Khalifa, the Prime Minister brought a letter or two of which the purport was that the troops appointed for the east had been defeated and beaten back and had been compelled to evocate Luknoor and fall back upon Kanauj (Qanuj).⁵⁸ Though the Minister looked very upset, Babur did not lose courage. As usual he maintained his composure and said that, "it is useless to be worried and upset, whatever is written in our fortune that shall certainly happen. So long as task is before us, we should not think about what we have heard just now. Tomorrow we shall deliver the assault and then we shall see what takes place." In other words even at this critical moment he (Babur) refused to abandon the plan of the conquest of Chanderi or to allow the news to interfere with his plans. On the other hand, the news conveyed by Mir Khalifa strengthened his resolve to conquer the fort as early as possible. The same evening his (Babur's) men entered the fortress and drove away the people inside the citidal. On 29th Jan. 1528 Babur ordered his to occupy their

positions and deliver a concerted attack. A general assault was then made. The Mughals scaled the walls and fell upon the garrison. Then began desperate fighting. Realizing that further resistance was futile the Rajputs at once consigned their wives to flames, and thereafter followed gruesome hand to hand fighting between the Rajputs and Mughals. Within an hour or so all was over. 2 or 300 Mughal men had entered Medini's Rao's house, where numbers of them slew each other. And the renowned fort was captured in 2 or 3 hours without raising my standard, or beating my kettle-drum, and without using the whole strength his forces. The chronogram of the victory was "Fath Darul Harab". After the conquest, and occupation of the fort was restored to Ahmad Shah, the grandson of Sultan Nasir-ud-din, a scion of the ruling house of Malwa, and fixed revenue of fifty lacs as Khalsa and appointing Mulla Apaqa as Shiqader with two to three thousand Turks and Hindustanis under him to support Ahmad Shah.⁵⁹

After Chanderi Babur had plans of campaigning against Raisin, Bhilsa and sarangpur. He also wanted to march against Rana sanga in Chittor, not knowing that the Rana had died earlier (30 January 1528), apparently poisoned by his own sardars who considered his plan to renew conflict with Babur to be suicidal. Meanwhile Babur was receiving alarming news about the activities of the Afghans in east U.P. Hence, he gave up plans for further campaigns in Malwa and Rajasthan, and made his mind to punish the Afghans of east. He (Babur) punished the Afghan's in the battle of Gogra River on 4-6 May 1529, was the final major battle in the career of Babur, and saw him defeat Sultan Nasrat Ali of Bengal in a battle that was really only incidental to the main purpose of Babur's campaign in the east.

Towards the end of 1528 Babur had dispatched part of his army, under his son Askari, to the east in an attempt to deal with some of the last Afghan opponents of his rule, most notably Biban and Shaikh Baiazid. The decision to move east was made on 21 January 1529. Babur reached the Ganges on 26 February, and two days later was joined by Askari, with his army. The two Mughal armies then advanced east, on opposite banks of the Ganges, heading towards Mahmud Lodi's force of 10,000 Afghans (including Sher Khan Sur, the man who would later depose Babur's son Humayun). The exact reason for the hostility between Babur and Nasrat Khan is unclear. Babur sent ambassadors who made three demands, but these are missing from Babur's memoirs. The Bengali answer to Babur's demands was clearly not adequate, and Babur began to plan his attack on the Gogra position, which now also contained Bengali troops. The plan was arranged on 28 April. The battle itself is normally stated as having been fought on 4-6

May, although Babur's own memoirs place it one day early. Here we will follow the generally accepted date. On the morning of 2 May Babur's army crossed to the north bank of the Ganges, and Prince Askari's force began its March north-west up the Gogra. Two days later, on 4 May, the army advanced two miles downstream to the confluence, where the guns were set up and a harassing fire opened across the river.

On 5 May Babur dispatched a force of Mughals up the Gogra to find another possible crossing point. This movement was spotted from the far bank, and a force of Bengali foot soldiers crossed the river in 20 to 30 boats from a camp opposite Askari's camp. The Mughals charged the Bengalis, defeating them and capturing 7 or 8 boats. At about the same time the Bengalis crossed the Ganges to attack Babur's men on the south bank, but suffered another defeat. Three boats must have sunk on the way back across the river, and a fourth was captured. The day also saw Prince Askari third son of Emperor Babur successfully cross the river, apparently somewhere to the north of the Bengali lines. Babur had decided to use the captured boats to send another force across the river in a different place, but when this news reached him this force was ordered to join Askari.

On the morning of 5 May Askari advanced down the eastern bank of the Gogra, while the Bengali cavalry moved north to face him. Babur responded by ordered the men with him to cross the river, at first in captured boats. This small party was attacked by the Bengalis, but held them off. This success encouraged the rest of Babur's men to try and cross the river some in boats, some swam and some used bundles of reeds either as floats or as rafts. At this point Babur's men were quite vulnerable, but he was able to organise them before the Bengalis could take advantage. Babur's men then attacked the southern flank of the Bengali force, just as the first of Prince Askari's men arrived from the north. The Bengalis were now being attacked from two sides and this was enough to convince them to retreat east down the Ganges. Babur doesn't mention any determined pursuit of the Bengali army, who after all were not the main target of his expedition. Over the next few days' messengers arrived from Nasrat Shah, and peace was arranged.

The battle of Ghagra is the supplement to the battles of Panipat and Khanua; these three battles made Babur the master of northern India. The battle of Ghagra frustrated the last stand to the Afghans. Maruf Farmuli and several other Afghan chiefs joined him (Babur), while Biban and Bayazid escaped across the Ghagra. Jalal Khan, the late boy-king of Bihar, acknowledged

Babur as overlord and a treaty of peace was concluded with Nusrat Shah, according to which the two monarchs agreed to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other's dominions and promised not to support or give shelter to their respective enemies.

Mahmud Lodi rather disappears from the picture at this point, but Biban and Baiiazid were soon on the move, heading west. Babur set off in pursuit, but he was never able to catch them, and they were both still undefeated at the time of his death in 1530. But Babur successfully defeated Nusrat Shah and Mohammad Lodi.⁶⁰ After the battle of Ghagra Babur became the master of northern India. His description about India, "Hindustan is of the first climate, the second climate, and the third climate; of the fourth climate it has none. It is a wonderful country. Compared with our countries it is a different world; its mountains, rivers, jungles and deserts, its towns, its cultivated lands, its animals and plants, its peoples and their tongues, its rains, and its winds, are all different. In some respects the hot country (garm-sit) that depends on Kabul, is like Hindustan, but in others, it is different. Once the water of Sind is crossed, everything is in the Hindustan way land, water, tree, rock, people and horde, opinion and custom."⁶¹ Kashmir is the one respectable town in these mountains, no other indeed being heard of, Hindustanis might pronounce it Kasmir.⁶² The people of Hind (Hindustan), having thus divided the year in to three seasons of four months each, divide each of these season by taking from each, the two months of the force of the heat, rain and cold. Pleasant things of Hindustan are that it is a large country and had masses of gold and silver."⁶³

Babur did not keep good health towards the last days of his life. The strain of continuous warfare, administrative liabilities and excessive drinking, till the battle of Khanua, had told very heavily on his physique and he felt totally exhausted. He also began to suffer from homesickness and occasionally 'could not help weeping'. After the battle of Khanua, he had sent Humayun to Badakshan as its governor; the latter could not bear the burden of this tough assignment, however, and returned to India without seeking permission from the emperor. He (Humayun) was asked to take charge of his estate at Sambhal where he (Humayun) fell seriously ill. He recovered after some time but this incident must also have exercised severe strain upon the mind of Babur and resulted in further deterioration of his already weakened constitution. He (Babur) died at Agra at the age of 48 years, on 26 December, 1530. The Muslim historians relate a romantic anecdote regarding his (Babur's) death. It is said that when his son, Humayun, fell ill, Babur, by a fervent prayer to God, had his son's disease transferred to his own body, and thus

while the son began to recover, the fathers health gradually declined till he ultimately succumbed, two or three months after Humayun's recovery. His body was taken to Afghanistan, in accordance with his own desire, expressed long before his death, and buried near a spring situated in the imperial garden (Aram-bagh) on the side of a hill near Kabul, a place of which he had once written; "Kabul in spring is an Eden of verdure and blossom".

V.A. Smith characterized Babur as "the most brilliant Asiatic prince of his age, and worthy of high place among the sovereigns of any age or country," while Havell thought "His engaging personality, artistic temperament, and romantic career make him one the most attractive figures in the history of Islam." 'In his person,' Ferishta wrote, 'Babur was handsome, his address was engaging and unaffected, his countenance was pleasing, and his disposition affable. Last but not least Babur's own, Mirza Haider Daughlat, described him as 'adorned with various virtues and clad with numberless excellences, above all which towered bravery and humanity Indeed, no one of his (Babur's) family before him ever possessed such talents, nor any of his race perform such amazing exploits or experience such strange adventures.' Three days after the death of Babur, Humayun succeeded the throne of Delhi at the age of 23 (December 30, 1530 A. D.).⁶⁴

Conclusion

The history of the Mughals in India started in the year 1526, when Emperor Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur invaded India. Babur, apart from being a great military strategist, was also an extremely strong man. There are legendary tales of how, during his exercise regimen, he would carry two men, one on each shoulder, and then climb slopes on the run. Emperor Babur also swam across every major river he encountered, including twice across the Ganges in North India. No wonder he was able to conquer India that many foreign invaders had failed to do in the past. After setting the foundations of the Mughal Empire, which went on to become the most dominant power in the Indian sub-continent from mid 16th century till the early 18th century. Babur lived a difficult life, always battling to make a place for himself. In the end, however, he planted the seed on one of the world's great empire's, but did not enjoy its fruits.

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